



## *National Cooperation for Laboratory Accreditation*

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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GAITHERSBURG, MD, October 2, 2000 – The National Cooperation for Laboratory Accreditation (NACLA) has announced its formal recognition of three U.S. accrediting bodies: the American Association for Laboratory Accreditation (A2LA); the International Council of Building Officials Evaluation Service (ICBO ES); and the National Voluntary Laboratory Accreditation Program (NVLAP).

The basis for NACLA recognition was a three step process: Careful review of the accrediting bodies (AB's) documents and procedures; a thorough on-site evaluation by a team of NACLA experts to determine the AB's compliance with NACLA recognition procedures and the international standard for accrediting bodies (ISO/IEC 58); and review of the evaluation team's report and recommendation by representatives of peer ABs and interested NACLA-member specifiers at a September 29 meeting of NACLA's Acceptance Panel.

When the Acceptance Panel judged each of the applicant ABs to be competent, the three were invited to become the charter signatories of the NACLA mutual recognition arrangement (MRA). Under the MRA, each AB will treat the accreditations, test reports and certificates of the other signatories as technically equivalent.

The MRA was signed by Donald N. Heirman, of Lucent Technologies, NACLA President; Michael Rafalowski, of the U.S. Federal Highway Administration, Chair of the NACLA Recognition Committee; and leaders of the three ABs; Peter Unger, A2LA President; C.P. Ramani, Director of ICBO ES; and David Alderman, Chief of NVLAP.

In addition, Rich Kayser, NIST's Director of Technology Services, witnessed the signings. NIST and NACLA have a memorandum of understanding (MOU) that provides for NIST to rely on NACLA-recognized laboratory accrediting bodies in support of its role as designating authority in mutual recognition arrangements between the U.S. and other regions of the world.

NACLA is a private-sector, nonprofit voluntary organization whose mission is to coordinate U.S. laboratory accreditation. It will evaluate all ABs who apply for recognition and invite those found competent to become signatories of its MRA. Further, by linking with other recognition cooperations (including the International Laboratory Accreditation Cooperation and the cooperation planned for North America), NACLA aims to realize the goal of worldwide acceptance of U.S. tests, calibrations and accreditations.

For further information, contact the NACLA Secretariat (see above).

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